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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 2005
“HALLOWEEN Safety Tips for Your Pets”

Halloween can be a festive and fun time of year for children and families, but for family pets it can be a stressful and even dangerous time of year. The San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control Program offers pet owners the following commonsense tips to help keep their pets safe during this time of year.

- Do not leave your pet out in the yard on Halloween. There are plenty of horror stories of vicious pranksters who have teased, injured, stolen, and even killed pets on this night.
- Keep pets, especially outdoor cats, inside several days before and several days after Halloween; black cats in particular may be at risk from children's pranks or other cruelty-related incidents.
- Trick-or-treat candies are not for pets: Chocolate is poisonous to a lot of animals and tin foil and cellophane candy wrappers can be hazardous if swallowed.
- Keep pets away from lit pumpkins: Pets may knock it over and cause a fire. Curious kittens especially run the risk of getting burned.
- Do not dress your dog or cat in a costume unless you know for sure that he or she loves it. Otherwise, it puts too much stress on the animal. If you do dress up your pet, make sure that the costume is not annoying or unsafe; it should not constrict his/her movement, hearing, or ability to breathe or bark. Also, there should not be small, dangling, or easily chewed-off pieces on the costume that your pet could choke on. Pets should always be supervised, especially one that is dressed up in a costume.
- All but the most social of dogs and cats should be kept in a separate room during trick-or-treat visiting hours; too many strangers in costumes can be scary for a dog or cat.
- When opening the door for trick-or-treaters, be very careful that your dog or cat does not dart outside. It is best to keep them locked in a separate room where they can feel safe away from all the noise.
- Make sure that your dog or cat is wearing proper identification (ID tag, license, microchip, tattoo, etc.). If for any reason they escape and become lost, you increase the chances that they will be returned to you.

For more information about caring for your pet, please call the San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control Program toll free at 1-800-472-5609.

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